

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TEXTILES
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-3356
ANSWERED ON- 20/03/2026

ASSISTANCE TO ARTISANS AND WEAVERS UNDER NHDP

3356. SHRI S.R. SIVALINGAM:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has completed the structured outreach through Export Promotion Councils and Indian Missions abroad as part of implementing the comprehensive 40-country market diversification strategy;
- (b) if so, the details of the specific support Government provided to artisans and weavers under comprehensive schemes such as the National Handloom Development Programme and National Handicrafts Development Programme; and
- (c) measures Government adopted regarding the exemption of import duty on cotton to ensure adequate supply, reduce input costs and enhance the textile industry's export competitiveness?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES
(SHRI GIRIRAJ SINGH)

(a): The Ministry of Textiles has formulated a comprehensive and focused country-market diversification strategy aimed at identifying high-potential global destinations for Indian textile exports. The strategy envisages structured and targeted outreach in these identified markets through coordinated efforts of Export Promotion Councils (EPCs), industry delegations, and Indian Missions abroad, with the objective of reducing market concentration risks and establishing a more resilient, diversified, and sustainable global footprint for the Indian textile industry.

Under this initiative, Nodal Officers from the Ministry have been assigned for the target countries, which have been grouped into different geographic blocs. In addition, Nodal Officers from the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) have also been associated with the initiative to provide design, product adaptation, and market-oriented support. The Ministry is actively coordinating with Indian Embassies/Missions in the focus countries to reinforce diplomatic engagement and trade facilitation efforts in support of textile exports.

As part of this strategy, the Ministry has, during the current year, deputed delegations to several identified countries for the promotion of Indian textile products in coordination with Export Promotion Councils (EPCs) and Indian Missions abroad. Further, structured support is provided under the Market Access Support (MAS) component of the Export Promotion Mission (EPM) for activities abroad, including in the identified countries, such as Buyer-Seller Meets (BSMs), trade fairs, exhibitions, and other related market access initiatives, with a view to strengthening India's access to international markets.

In addition, India has signed 16 Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), and several of the identified focus countries are already covered under these agreements. These include Australia, the UAE, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Further, several countries covered under the focused initiative are members of the European Union, with which India has recently concluded FTA negotiations.

(b): The Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) under the aegis of Ministry of Textiles implements two schemes namely National Handicrafts Development Programme (NHDP) and Comprehensive Handicrafts Cluster Development Scheme (CHCDS) for overall development and promotion of handicrafts sector across the country. International Marketing Events are organized in India and abroad under Marketing Support and Services (MSS) component of the NHDP scheme to promote export of handicraft and strengthen global branding. Support is provided to eligible organizations for organizing and participating in international fairs and conducting International Craft Exposure Programme, Buyer seller Meet & Reverse Buyer Seller Meet, Fairs/Exhibitions/Events on Virtual Platform, Road Show and Implementing overseas awareness campaigns to promote Indian Handicrafts.

In addition, awardee artisans and exporters of handicraft are nominated to participate in these international marketing events, enabling them to directly access global markets, showcase their craftsmanship, and build international buyer linkages. The financial support under the MSS component of the NHDP scheme, provides for space rent, infrastructure facilities, publicity of events, TA/DA and freight charges for participating artisans in events organized in India. Boarding/lodging charges is also provided to the artisans nominated for participation in international marketing events.

The Ministry of Textiles is administering National Handloom Development Programme to provide specific support to handloom weavers across the country. Under the scheme, financial assistance is provided to eligible handloom agencies/workers for procurement of upgraded looms & accessories, solar lighting units, construction of workshed, product diversification & design innovation, technical and common infrastructure, publicity and brand development through India Handloom Brand (IHB), Handloom Mark (HLM) and GI tag, e-commerce facilities, marketing of handloom products in domestic/overseas markets, concessional loans under weavers' MUDRA scheme and social security etc

(c): During the current cotton season 2025-26, to ensure adequate availability of cotton to the domestic textile industry, the Government of India had exempted the import duty on cotton under tariff heading 5201 from 19.08.2025 to 31.12.2025 vide Notification No. 35/2025-Customs dated 18.08.2025 and Notification No. 36/2025-Customs dated 28.08.2025 issued by the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance to ensure sufficient availability of quality raw material. The Import duty (including 5% Customs Duty, 5% AIDC, and 10% Cess) is again applicable after 31.12.2025. Further, to ensure adequate supply & reduced input costs, the Ministry of Textiles provides transport subsidy for transportation of yarn to the doorstep of the beneficiaries and 15% Price Subsidy on Cotton Hank yarn etc. under the Raw Material supply Scheme.
